

## **ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION AND ADULT EDUCATION: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is alternative education?**

Alternative education is designed to meet the needs of students who may be at risk of dropping out of school. In alternative programs, students are provided with a variety of academic options and are supported by services for themselves and their families that are essential to success.

Alternative education programs generally have small student/teacher ratios (no greater than 15:1); clearly stated missions and program purposes; caring faculty with continual staff development; high expectations for students; learning programs specific to the mission of the program and participating students' needs; flexible school schedules with community involvement and support; and total commitments to student success.

Alternative education programs must create Individual Service Plans for all students, which detail the student's academic and behavioral goals, as well as services needed for the success of the student and the student's immediate family.

Three types of alternative education programs are offered in Indiana.

- Programs that operate as interventions for students who are failing academically, to help students get back on track for academic success;
- Programs that operate as interventions for students who have had behavioral issues or that operate as alternatives to expulsion; and
- Programs that allow students (usually in grades 10-12) to obtain academic credit while also providing them with job opportunities, service learning opportunities, career exploration, and other types of activities and services to help address current issues in students' lives and to prepare them for life after school.

### **What is adult education?**

The state adult education program is for an Indiana resident who: (1) has officially withdrawn from a K-12 program and does not have a high school diploma; or (2) is a high school graduate and has been determined to need basic skill development in English language arts or mathematics at or below the high school level. An individual may participate but not be counted toward reimbursement if he is enrolled in a K-12 program and is at least 16 years of age, or is a high school graduate who is not eligible.

The adult education program also operates under Title II of the Workforce Investment Act, The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. The act has several purposes.

- To create a partnership among federal government, states, and localities to provide adult education and literacy services.
- To assist adults to become literate and obtain knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency.
- To assist parents to obtain the educational skills necessary to become partners in the educational development of their children.
- To assist adults in the completion of a secondary education. Family literacy and workforce education are also offered within these programs.

## **What are the similarities and differences between alternative education and adult education?**

- Adult education primarily serves individuals who have already dropped out of school, while alternative education programs are primarily designed to keep students from dropping out of school.
- Adult education often serves older individuals, while alternative education programs are generally designed for students in grades 6-12.
- Students in alternative education are fully enrolled in and attending school, while adult education students must be officially withdrawn from school.
- Alternative education programs are generally credit-generating, with the purpose of helping students make up credits lost or helping prevent students from academic failure; helping students remain tied to education while serving an expulsion; or helping students accelerate credits earned to graduate from high school. Adult education programs offer high school credit and more, including literacy, adult basic education (ABE), English literacy, and general educational development (GED) preparation.
- Students in alternative education, because they are fully enrolled in and attending school, may be claimed for state tuition support. Adult education students may not.

## **Can there be joint programs in districts for alternative education?**

Yes. Under Indiana Code, more than one school district may join together to operate an alternative education program. These programs are called joint programs. When more than one district participates in a joint program, they must have joint services agreements in place. One school corporation must act as the fiscal agent for the program, and teachers in the program must be employed by one or more of the corporations that are involved in the joint services agreements.

## **What funding is available for alternative education and adult education?**

Students enrolled in and attending alternative education programs may be claimed by the school corporation for state and local tuition support.

Under Indiana Code 20-30-8, there is also a small grant available to help offset the additional costs of operating an alternative education program. In 2007-08, the grant offers up to \$550 per full time equivalent student. A full time equivalent student is defined as a student attending the program for an entire day, 180 days per year. Funds are distributed on a reimbursement basis for the previous calendar year.

The state Board of Education and superintendent of public instruction have statutory responsibility for administering state and federal adult education funds for programs addressing skills below the high school completion level in Indiana.

State adult education funding is limited to school corporations and is distributed on a reimbursement basis for the previous semester. The federal grant supplements the state funding to support the program. A variety of types of eligible agencies have "equitable access" to apply for multi-year funding to conduct programs. Under federal statute, these funds are required to be competitive. The multi-year grants are re-competed every three years, unless the U.S. Department of Education grants an extension. Local programs have established

relationships within the education system and with community agencies that serve the target population to leverage other funding, services, and facilities.

### **Who can be counted for funding under the alternative education grant?**

- By law, only students enrolled in alternative programs who are in grades 6-12 may be claimed for the full time equivalent reimbursement.
- In order to be claimed for reimbursement, students must be fully enrolled in and attending school;
- In order to be claimed for reimbursement, a student must fall into one of the following eligibility categories:
  - Intends to withdraw or has withdrawn before graduation;
  - Has failed to comply academically and would benefit from instruction offered in a manner different from the traditional school;
  - Is a parent or expectant parent;
  - Is employed and the employment is necessary for support; or
  - Is a disruptive student.
- To be eligible for reimbursement, a program must operate for a minimum of two consecutive hours.
- Teachers in the alternative education program must be employees of the school corporation that operates the program, or (if the program is a joint program) employees of at least one of the school corporations that have entered into the joint services agreement.

### **Who can be counted for funding under adult education?**

Only an Indiana resident who (1) has officially withdrawn from a K-12 program and does not have a high school diploma; or (2) is a high school graduate and has been determined to need basic skill development in English language arts or mathematics at or below the high school level can be counted.

An individual may participate but not be counted toward reimbursement if he or she is enrolled in a K-12 program and is at least 16 years of age, or is a high school graduate who is not eligible.

### **Can students be claimed for alternative education and ADM (state tuition support)?**

Yes. Students in alternative education are fully enrolled in and attending school and therefore can be claimed for state tuition support. However, students must have legal settlement (there may be exceptions in the case of a student who is homeless or unattached under the federal McKinney-Vento law) and be fully enrolled in the school corporation (or school corporations, in the case of joint alternative education programs) in order to be claimed for state tuition support.

### **Can students be counted for both alternative education funding and adult education funding?**

No. Students who can be counted for alternative education funding must be fully enrolled in and attending school. Students who can be counted for adult education funding must have officially withdrawn from school.

### **Can students in alternative education be enrolled in GED preparation?**

Yes. Students in alternative education programs may participate in GED preparation programs. However, because alternative education programs should be primarily credit generating, GED preparation should not be the sole focus of the alternative education program. In addition, a student participating in a GED preparation program who is enrolled in an alternative education program should also participate in some credit generating activities.

### **Can students transfer from regular or alternative education into adult education?**

No. Students in adult education programs must have officially withdrawn from school. Therefore, a student leaving an alternative program or a regular school to go to directly to an adult education program must be considered a withdrawal, not a transfer.

### **What are the teacher requirements for alternative education and adult education?**

Teachers in alternative education programs must be employed by the school corporation that oversees the alternative education program, or by one or more of the school corporations that are part of the joint services agreement (in the case of a joint alternative program).

Teachers providing direct services in alternative education programs must be fully licensed and highly qualified. However, for teachers working in multiple subjects, there is a multi-subject waiver available. For more information about the multi-subject waiver, see [http://www.doe.state.in.us/hqt/pdf/HOUSSE\\_multisubjectteacherwaivers.pdf](http://www.doe.state.in.us/hqt/pdf/HOUSSE_multisubjectteacherwaivers.pdf).

If the alternative program is utilizing independent learning or computer-based learning, teachers who are acting as facilitators do not need to be highly qualified in every content area (however, they must hold a valid teaching license).

For more information about teacher-facilitators in computer-based programs, see [http://www.doe.state.in.us/alted/pdf/memo\\_computer-based\\_courseware.pdf](http://www.doe.state.in.us/alted/pdf/memo_computer-based_courseware.pdf) and <http://www.doe.state.in.us/hqt/pdf/ComputerBasedCourseClarification.pdf>.

Teachers in adult education programs must be licensed in any area related to the proficiencies being taught. Adult secondary credit (ASC) teachers shall be licensed in the subject area being taught. If ASC classes are offered as independent study, a teacher may be licensed outside the subject area if certain conditions are met. See 511 IAC 11-7-2 for more information.

### **Can districts leverage resources between alternative education and adult education?**

Yes. In some cases, alternative education programs utilize the same buildings as adult education programs. In addition, sometimes the programs use some of the same teachers. Districts may also allow students enrolled in alternative education programs to participate in some classes offered in the adult education program, or vice versa.

Please note, however, that alternative education students who are participating in adult education programs may not be claimed for adult education funding, because these students would be fully enrolled in and attending school.

Conversely, adult education students could not be claimed for alternative education funding because adult education students must be withdrawn from school.

## **Where can I find more information?**

For more information specifically about alternative education, visit <http://www.doe.state.in.us/alted/altedlinkpg.html>.

For more information specifically about adult education, visit <http://www.doe.state.in.us/adulted/welcome.html>.

For frequently asked questions about alternative education, see [http://www.doe.state.in.us/alted/pdf/alted\\_q\\_and\\_a.pdf](http://www.doe.state.in.us/alted/pdf/alted_q_and_a.pdf).

For more information about differences between adult education and alternative education, see [http://www.doe.state.in.us/alted/pdf/memo\\_adulted\\_clarification.pdf](http://www.doe.state.in.us/alted/pdf/memo_adulted_clarification.pdf).